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REPORT

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SUBJECT Changes of Organization and Armament in Several Tank and Artillery Units of the Soviet Occupation Forces in Germany

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The following study of changes of organization and armament of several tank and artillery units of the Soviet occupation forces in Germany is an attempt to clarify the differences between the information on organization and the organizations as believed to exist from previous analysis.

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During the last two years, the organizational structure of the Soviet combat divisions has apparently been changed in an effort to make it possible for divisions and regimental combat teams to fight independently with the aid of supporting and supplementing arms attached.

The following indications of structural changes are not definite, this study is subject to revisions.

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Artillery and tank units which no longer agree with the T/O and T/E carried included:

1. AAA regiments of the tank and mechanized divisions and motorized rifle corps and AAA battalions of the motorized rifle divisions.
2. Artillery regiments of the mechanized divisions.
3. Artillery regiments (battalions) of the tank divisions.
4. Mortar regiments of the tank and mechanized divisions.
5. Heavy tank and SP gun regiments of: tank divisions; mechanized divisions; motorized rifle armies.
6. Medium tank regiments of: tank divisions; mechanized divisions.
7. SP artillery battery of the motorized rifle regiments of the motorized rifle divisions.

Observations indicated that the reorganization and rearming was not uniform in all units and, depending on a large number of factors, was apparently occurring slowly and gradually in some instances.

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25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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Only several tank units, for example, apparently come up to the prescribed T/O while others still have the structure effected by the reorganization after World War II.

A. Artillery Units.

Some of the artillery units utilize the availability of larger calibers to obtain greater fire effect which is a natural trend with the establishment of the artillery arm. The artillery of the tank and mechanized divisions had also to come up to the requirements of independent mobile warfare and thus employ multiple purpose guns which can be easily moved. An indication of this trend, for example, is the additional incorporation of the ZIS-3 76.2-mm field gun as an all-purpose gun into artillery units.

1a. AAA regiments of the tank and mechanized divisions and motorized rifle corps.

The T/O and T/E carried, except for the corps AAA regiments whose organization and armament had not been established, was four batteries each with 4 x 37-mm AA guns, 1 AA machine gun company with 16 x 127-mm AA machine guns and a war strength of 395 troops. Since 1951, 85-mm AA guns have increasingly been observed with the regiments. Because of its light armament, the divisional AAA was previously able to effectively eliminate low-level aircraft only, but its fire range was considerably enlarged by the assignment of medium AAA. The divisional AAA is thus in a position to cover altitudes which are usually used by heavy bomb-carrying airplanes. Considering that targets for these bombers do not usually appear in the area of a combat division, the reinforcement of the regiments may at first appear unintelligible. However, the medium AAA can be used in ground combat too and is suitable for eliminating bunkers, tanks and islands of resistance. Secondly the guns are able, from their front positions and without being bound to any installations, to fire at enemy bombers which have the rear area for their target. This would force the bombers to altitudes at precision bombing is difficult.

An analysis of available information indicates that the corps AAA regiments are probably organized and armed as those in the tank and mechanized divisions.

The new organization consists of 3 batteries each with 4 x 37-mm AA guns, or, possibly, 2 batteries each with 6 x 37-mm AA guns; 2 batteries each with 4 x 85-mm AA guns (up to 16 x 37-mm AA guns have been observed at three posts); 1 AA machine gun company with 16 x 127-mm AA machine guns; and a war strength of about 730 troops.

Firing equipment, usually of SCR-584 type, has been observed with medium AAA units of the AAA divisions since 1952. These radar devices have not been observed with the AAA regiments of the divisions. There is insufficient information available on the introduction of AA rocket launchers with AAA units in the East Germany but indications of their presence began to appear in the summer of 1952.

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1b. AAA battalions of the motorized rifle divisions.

The T/O and T/E carried was 1 battalion with 3 batteries each with 6 x 37-mm AA guns and a war strength of 265 troops.

Some rough indications led to the assumption that the battalions, just as the AAA regiments, had probably also been reinforced. Detailed information from Schwerin in February 1953 tended to indicate that the new organization possibly was 2 batteries each with 6 x 37-mm AAA, 1 battery with 4 x 85-mm AAA and a war strength of about 300 troops. This is not definite however, and must be supplemented by observations from other posts.

2. Artillery regiments of the mechanized divisions.

The T/O and T/E carried was 2 battalions each with 3 batteries of 4 x 122-mm field howitzers and a war strength of 240 troops to the battalion and 620 troops to the regiment. However, it was possible that these regiments would be reequipped with 152-mm field howitzers instead of the previous 122-mm howitzers. Since 1951, several reports tended to indicate that this rearmament had already started with several regiments. As, however, only a small number of indications was received and as these could as well be errors in observation, the problem could not definitely be solved. It can only be stated that although the rearmament was possibly planned, it could in no case be evidenced while the organization and equipment as indicated above could be confirmed. On the other hand, information , definitely indicated that these regiments had additional equipment of 76.2-mm guns. They are probably primarily to serve as close combat protection of the artillery against tanks and also to be employed as light artillery. The strength of the 76.2-mm unit could not definitely be established on the basis of the available information. There is the possibility that the unit observed may be a battery with 6 x 76.2-mm guns or that each howitzer battery may have one such gun.

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Accordingly, the T/E and T/O of the artillery regiments of the mechanized divisions can now be carried as 2 battalions each with 3 batteries of 4 x 122-mm field howitzers and 1 battery with 6 x 76.2-mm ZIS-3 field guns or, possibly, 1 x 76-mm field gun each per 122-mm howitzer battery; and a war strength of 670 troops.

3. Artillery regiments (battalions) of the tank divisions.

The T/O and T/E carried was 1 howitzer artillery battalion each with 3 batteries of 4 x 122-mm field howitzers and a strength of 350 troops. The discrepancy between the organization carried and that indicated by the majority of the reports was particularly great with these units. Information indicated that the tank divisions had only one howitzer artillery battalion. Definite observations, made particularly in Neuruppin and Neustrelitz, indicated that this was not so. In addition to the fact that one howitzer artillery battalion would be rather weak for one tank division

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However, this type is still called T-34/85 tank until more definite information has been received. The SP gun units also underwent a process of change which has not yet been completed. All known types were observed including old models such as the SU-85. The SU-100 and JSU-249 were observed as fully armored AT guns, with the JSU-249 possibly gradually replacing the SU-100. The JSU-122 is probably being replaced by the JSU-152 as fully armored accompanying artillery. No definite information is available as the change appears to be incompleted in a large number of SP gun battalions.

The peace strength of the motorized rifle units of the medium and heavy tank regiments of the mechanized divisions could not be established on the basis of the available information. The question as to whether a motorized rifle company or battalion exists must therefore remain undecided. It is probable, however, that cadre personnel for one battalion is in existence.

5. Heavy tank and SP gun regiments of

a. Tank Divisions.

The T/O and T/E of the armored elements was 2 heavy tank battalions each with 21 JS type tanks, 1 SP gun battalion with 21 SU-100 guns and a war strength of 1,250 troops

The most essential change is the assignment of T-34 tanks. The figures from two posts of these regiments fluctuated between company and battalion strength. Information from most of the other posts indicated only the existence of T-34 tanks. Since it is only rarely possible to determine the actual maximum figures, it could be concluded that a T-34 tank battalion actually exists. This increases the total strength of the regiment by 165 troops. The regiment is capable of independent handling of missions pertaining to armored reconnaissance and mobile protection of flanks.

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The two heavy tanks battalions and the SP gun battalion were probably not affected by a change of organization.

The new organization of the tank units of the regiment is: 2 heavy tank battalions each with 21 JS-3 tanks; 1 medium tank company with 16 T-34 tanks and, on the basis of observations at military posts possibly even one medium tank battalion; 1 SP battalion with 21 SU-100 or JSU-122 or JSU-249 guns; and a war strength of the regiment of about 1,310 troops.

5. Heavy tank and SP gun regiments of

b. Mechanized Divisions.

The T/O and T/E carried was 1 heavy tank battalion with 21 JS tanks, 2 SP gun battalions with 21 SU-100 or JSU-249 guns and a war strength of 1,250 troops, including personnel of units not listed.

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indicated that a battalion equipped with 12 x 76.2-mm ZIS-3 field guns must be in existence in addition to the howitzer artillery battalion. The field howitzers may originally have been planned chiefly as supporting artillery for the motorized rifle regiment of the tank division. All elements and, specifically, all unarmored elements of the tank division, which is a definite attack division, have to expect counterattacks and, particularly, attacks by penetrating enemy tanks. This defense requirement can best be met by the assignment of AT guns which, for reasons of expediency, were attached to the artillery unit. The AT battalions can also be employed as light field artillery as a result of the employment of the aforementioned multipurpose gun.

The T/O and T/E of the mixed artillery regiments of the tank divisions is, therefore, now carried as: 1 battalion with 3 batteries each with 4 x 122-mm field howitzers and a war strength of 240 troops, and 1 battalion with 3 batteries each of [redacted] ZIS-3 field guns and a war strength of 220 troops. The war strength of the regiment is about 550 troops.

4. Mortar regiments of the tank and mechanized divisions.

The T/O and T/E carried was 2 battalions each with 3 batteries of 6 x 120-mm mortars and a war strength of 230 troops to the battalion and 580 troops to the regiment.

An analysis of nine regiments definitely showed that these units are also equipped with 160-mm mortars which were probably introduced in the units in 1951. The entire armament and present organization are more difficult to analyse. Strength estimates by sources, which must always be considered only rough indications, as well as the reported figures of arms and types of weapons produced no definite intelligence. The following two possibilities of the organization must therefore be only tentative and, although they are based on all available information, cannot be considered definite. First possible organization: 2 battalions each with 3 batteries of 6 x 120-mm mortars and a battalion strength of 230 troops; 1 battalion of 3 batteries each with 4 x 160-mm mortars and a battalion strength of 250 troops and a war strength of the regiment of about 820 troops. Second possible organization: 1 battalion with 3 batteries each with 6 x 120-mm mortars; 1 battalion with 3 batteries each with 4 x 160-mm mortars and a war strength of the regiment of about 600 troops. The arms figures indicated in the available information favors the first possibility while the strength estimates and motor vehicle [redacted] figures favor the second possibility.

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B. Tank Units.

It is beyond question that the obsolete tank and SP types were and are being slowly replaced by modern ones with the Soviet tank units in East Germany. Most of the units equipped with JS tanks can now be assumed to be equipped with JS-3 tanks. Individual JS-2 tanks still in use will probably entirely be put out of commission. The T-44, which is recognized by the hatch on the tank cover plate in front of the oblong turret and by its reinforced front armor armor, was frequently

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Thirty and 35 heavy tanks were [redacted] UNCODED
number of posts. The evaluation of [redacted] 25X1
especially those of the 84th Gds Heavy SP Regt of the 7th Gds Mecz Div furnished clear evidence of the existence of two battalions of heavy tanks. It can therefore be assumed that an SP battalion was replaced by a heavy tank battalion. The first replacements took place in some of the heavy tank SP gun regiments.

Up to 25 T-34 tanks were also observed with the heavy tank SP gun regiments at several posts. The fact that the information was supplied [redacted] discredits the possibility 25X1
that, in all cases, the tanks were mistaken for the SU-100 gun.

The large stocks of T-34 tanks stored in the U.S.S.R. possibly prompted the employment of these tanks instead of medium SP guns. It is also possible that a medium tank company may have been made an organic component of the heavy tank SP regiment for missions of armored reconnaissance and protection of flanks. The following new organization of the tank elements appears possible:

2 heavy tank battalions each with 21 JS-3 tanks, possibly including one battalion with 21 T-34 tanks; 1 SP gun battalion with 21 SU-100 or JSU-249 guns; 1 medium tank company with 10 T-34 tanks (?); and a war strength of the regiment of about 1,300 troops.

With regard to this organization, it must, however, be stated that the heavy tank SP gun regiments of several mechanized divisions still have the aforementioned organization of 1 heavy tank battalion and 2 SP gun battalions.

5. Heavy tank and SP gun regiments of

c. Motorized Rifle Armies.

The T/O and T/E carried for the armored elements was 1 heavy tank battalion with 23 JS tanks, 2 SP gun battalions each with 21 SU-100 or JSU-249 guns and a war strength of 1,250 troops including personnel of units not listed.

Corresponding to the regiments of the tank and mechanized divisions, the heavy tank and SP gun regiments of the motorized rifle armies can also be assumed to have one medium tank battalion. This was confirmed by definite information from the posts in Glauchau and Burg which, particularly in Burg, also indicated that the above organization is correct. Only the two SP gun battalions are apparently not uniformly equipped with identical SP gun types. Each of the two probably has one type of equipment, with one, according to the latest status, being equipped with JSU-152 (assault artillery) and the other with JSU-249 (AT guns). This type of armament was probably necessary to make the regiments capable of independent handling of many sided combat tasks within the framework of the motorized rifle armies.

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Accordingly, the organization is 1 heavy tank battalion with 23 JS-3 tanks, 1 medium tank battalion with 21 T-34 tanks, 1 SP gun battalion with 21 JSU-152, 1 SP gun battalion with 21 JSU-249, and a war strength of the regiment of about 1,430 troops.

6. Medium tank regiments of

a. Tank Divisions.

The T/O and T/E carried for the tank elements was 2 medium tank battalions each with 21 T-44 tanks, with the third battalion planned only as war strength, and a war strength of 1,220 troops including personnel of units not listed.

Information on four regiments of various divisions showed that a third battalion of heavy tanks was in existence. Although their type was not determined their existence could definitely be established

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As had already been mentioned at the beginning of this report, it is understandable that not all regiments have already this equipment. Most of them can, however, be assumed as having a third T-34 battalion and, thus, a unit which had been planned for war strength. This was confirmed in this specific instance by evaluation of The heavy tank battalion is probably planned as a reserve which, on the offensive, is to break particularly obdurate enemy resistance and, in the event of counterattacks specifically by heavy tanks, has to relieve the T-34 battalions which are less suitable for this task. This would also make it possible to employ the heavy tank and SP gun regiments of the tank divisions to a larger extent on combat missions which call for independent action, as well as on the establishment of points of main effort.

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The new organization is 2 medium tank battalions each with 21 T-34 tanks, 1 heavy tank battalion with 21 JS-3 tanks (with the heavy tank battalion in some instances still in existence as third medium tank battalion), and a war strength of the regiment of about 1,300 troops.

6. Medium tank regiments of

b. Mechanized Divisions.

The T/O and T/E carried for the armored elements was 2 medium tank battalions each with 21 T-34 tanks, with the third battalion planned only for war strength, 1 SP gun battalion with 21 ISU-152, and a war strength inclusive of personnel of units not listed of 1,480 troops.

The analysis concentrated on the existence of a third tank battalion which appeared probable

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25X1 indicated that two divisions had the third tank battalion which had been planned for war strength, and some indications were also available for other divisions. All available information indicates the aforementioned organization which now is 3 medium tank battalions each with 21 T-44 tanks, with the third battalion for war strength in some divisions still unavailable, 1 SP gun battalion with 21 JSU-152 guns and a war strength of still 1,480 troops.

Since the motorized rifle battalion of the regiment appears to still have only about 40 percent of the war strength personnel, the actual strength of the regiment probably is only about 1,200 troops.

7. SP artillery batteries of the motorized rifle regiments of the motorized rifle divisions.

The Third Shock Army and the Eighth Gds Army, the two armies which have motorized rifle divisions, differ with regard to the SP batteries of the motorized rifle regiments. While the regiments of the Eighth Gds Army were observed to have one SP battery with 6 SU-76 guns and while the old organization was confirmed with this army in the area of the Third Shock Army by the observation only once during a period of three years of one rifle regiment in Quedlinburg with guns of this type. As indications of T-34 tanks up to six tanks were simultaneously reported from several posts of motorized rifle regiments, there is the possibility that in the Third Shock Army, the SU-76 gun may have been exchanged for T-34.

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8. Following is a tabulation which shows both the total strengths of tanks and SP guns with the tank and mechanized division on the basis of the changes of organization discussed here and the T/O and T/E previously carried. It must, however, again be stressed that many of the assumed changes need further confirmation,

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a. Mechanized Division.

	T-34 tank	JS tank	SP guns SU-100 and JSU-249	SP guns JSU-122 and JSU-152
1) New actual strength (deviations observed)	153 (132)	44 (23)	21 (42)	21 -
2) Previous actual strength	122	23	42	21
3) New war strength (difference as compared with the actual strength exists only with the tank battalion and the reconnaissance company of the mechanized regiment)	192	44	21	21

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	T-34 tank	JS tank	SP guns SU-100 and JSU-249	SP guns JSU-122 and JSU-152
4) Previous war strength	182	23	42	21
b. Tank Division.				
1) New actual strength (deviations observed)	157 (220)	107 (44)	21 (21)	
2) Previous actual strength	147	44	21	
3) New war strength (equal to actual strength)	157	107	21	
4) Previous war strength	210	44	21	

1. [redacted] Comment: The nomenclature applied to the described tanks is incorrect, since the T-34/85 and T-44 are two distinct types. It is difficult to determine therefore which type is meant in the subsequent use of the term. 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

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